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KTXN31 AIRPOWER (ADVANCE FOR RELEASE AT 7 P.M. EDT SATURDAY)

CPYRCELL
BY ROSE MCKEE

WASHINGTON- MAY 26--(INS)--GEN. CURTIS E. LEMAY WARNED IN SECRET TESTIMONY MADE PUBLIC TODAY THAT UNDER PRESENT AIR PROGRAMS THE SOVIETS WILL BE ABLE TO DESTROY THE U. S. BY A COMPLETE SURPRISE ATTACK IN 1960. THE MAN WHO WOULD DIRECT A HYDROGEN BOMB ASSAULT ON MOSCOW IN EVENT OF WAR SAID THE RUSSIAN'S ABILITY TO WIPE OUT THIS COUNTRY MAY EVEN COME IN 1959. BUT LEMAY DECLARED IT "IS DEFINITE" THAT IN "1960 (RUSSIA) CAN DO IT WITH A COMPLETE SURPRISE ATTACK."

THE HEAD OF THE STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND TESTIFIED BEFORE THE SUB-COMMITTEE- HEADED BY SEN. STUART SYMINGTON (D) MO.- WHICH IS INVESTIGATING THE ADEQUACY OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S AIR PROGRAM. THE TESTIMONY WAS MADE PUBLIC AFTER SECURITY DELETIONS BY THE PENTAGON.

LEMAY PREVIOUSLY WARNED IN OPEN HEARINGS THAT RUSSIA WILL OUTSTRIP THIS COUNTRY IN LONG-RANGE STRIKING POWER IN TWO TO FOUR YEARS.

HE EXPANDED ON THIS IN THE NEW TESTIMONY- WHICH DREW A PICTURE OF U.S. INADEQUACIES IN MANPOWER- BASES- GLOBAL BOMBERS- JET TANKERS AND MONEY.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS WERE:

1. LEMAY'S TESTIMONY PUT HIM IN CONFLICT WITH STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT EISENHOWER ON THE ROLE OF THE NAVY'S ARM. MR. EISENHOWER SAID MAY 4 THAT THE NAVY "FEATURES ONE THING- AIR POWER." LEMAY- WHOSE SECRET TESTIMONY WAS GIVEN BEFORE MAY 4- SAID IN EFFECT THAT NAVAL AIR POWER COULD NOT BE RELIED ON AND WOULD BE OF LITTLE USE IN EVENT OF A SURPRISE ATTACK.

2. SYMINGTON DISCLOSED THAT ALLEN DULLES- HEAD OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY- ALSO WARNED BEHIND CLOSED DOORS OF THE "GROWING DISCREPANCY IN (AIR POWER) IN FAVOR OF THE COMMUNISTS." HIS TESTIMONY HAS NOT YET BEEN RELEASED.

3. LEMAY APPEARED IN CONFLICT - TOO- WITH DEFENSE SECRETARY CHARLES E. WILSON WHO TERMED THE B-47- THE MEDIUM JET BOMBER- THE "HEART OF OUR STRATEGIC AIR POWER." LEMAY SAID THAT AS A GLOBAL BOMBER- IT HAS REFUELING PROBLEMS BUT ITS MAIN DRAWBACK IS "CREW FATIGUE." IT NORMALLY CARRIES A CREW OF THREE.

4. THE FIRST JET TANKERS--NEEDED TO REFUEL B-47S AND B-52S IN THEIR NUCLEAR BOMB-DROPPING MISSIONS- WILL NOT BE IN OPERATION UNTIL NEXT APRIL.

5. LEMAY WARNED THAT RUSSIAN SUBMARINES MAY GO INTO THE GULF OF MEXICO AND "LAUNCH MISSILES FROM THERE."

6. THE GENERAL SAID HE WOULD PREFER TO HAVE SOME BIG STRATEGIC AIR BASES IN THE NORTHERN U. S. HE SAID THEY WERE SCATTERED THROUGH THE SOUTHERN STATES "BY ACCIDENT" OF GROWTH.

LEMAY'S DIRE PREDICTION THAT RUSSIA COULD DESTROY THE U.S. BY 1960 WAS MADE IN REPLY TO SYMINGTON- WHO ASKED: "IN WHAT YEAR-IF THE PRESENT PROGRAMS GO ALONG- WILL THEY (THE SOVIETS) BE IN A POSITION TO HIT US- TO DESTROY US?"

LEMAY REPLIED: "...THAT IS DEFINITE- 1960- HE CAN DO IT WITH A COMPLETE SURPRISE ATTACK." HE SAID THAT "POSSIBLY" THE SOVIETS COULD DO IT IN 1959.

THE GENERAL SUGGESTED THERE SHOULD BE A WORLD-WIDE AIR COMMANDER TO "EXPLOIT ATOMIC FORCES OF ALL THE SERVICES INTO ONE COORDINATED ATTACK."

SYMINGTON POINTED OUT THAT WILSON DECLINED TO JOIN IN LEMAY'S PUBLIC TESTIMONY THAT U.S. STRIKING POWER WILL BE INFERIOR TO RUSSIA'S IN TWO TO FOUR YEARS.

THE SENATOR- DISCLOSING THAT THE NATION'S TOP INTELLIGENCE OFFICIAL ALSO WARNED OF GROWING AIR DISCREPANCY IN FAVOR OF THE SOVIETS- SAID THAT IF WILSON WAS CORRECT- THEN LEMAY AND DULLES WERE WRONG. LEMAY MADE NO COMMENT.

THE GENERAL TESTIFIED THAT "ALERT TIME" IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN EVENT OF A SURPRISE ATTACK.

HE SAID THAT THE DISTANT EARLY WARNING (DEW) LINE BEING BUILT IN NORTH CANADA WOULD NOT BE COMPLETED UNTIL ABOUT 1958.

BUT HE SAID ALSO IT WILL HAVE LIMITED USE BECAUSE WHEN THE RUSSIANS GET MISSILES- "THE DEW LINE WON'T BE ANY PROTECTION."

BY 1960- LEMAY CONTINUED- THE RUSSIANS WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE OFF FROM THEIR HOMELAND- "GO CLEAR AROUND THE WARNING LINE AND COME IN FROM THE SOUTHEAST- AND HIT THE COAST WITH VERY LITTLE WARNING."

LEMAY TESTIFIED THAT HIS FIRST NEED IS MANPOWER- THEN BASES- BOMBERS AND TANKERS.

HE SAID HIS FORCES OUGHT TO HAVE SOME BOMBERS "ON THE ALERT"--LOADED AND IN THE AIR AT ALL TIMES--BECAUSE THIS WOULD CUT THE LOSSES IN EVENT OF A SURPRISE ATTACK. BUT TO DO THIS- HE SAID- WOULD REQUIRE MORE COMBAT-READY CREWS THAN HE HAS.

THE GENERAL AGREED WITH MR. EISENHOWER THAT MISSILES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED WITH UTMOST URGENCY. BUT HE PUT PRODUCTION OF B-52 OCEAN-SPANNING BOMBERS EVEN AHEAD OF MISSILES.

(END) 5/24/56 ERL2LOAKYZRS CORR